

**THE BALTIC SEA INITIATIVE AND ACTION PLAN –
HIV/AIDS PREVENTION IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION**

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Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS

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CONTENTS

Executive Summary.....	1
Introduction.....	5
Rationale.....	6
Strategic Framework and Specific Objectives.....	10
Programme Approach.....	11
Expected Outputs: Sub-Regional Level.....	17
Baltic Sea Action Plan and Priority Interventions.....	17
Sub-Regional Activities.....	18
Country Level Interventions	19

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

A window of opportunity to prevent a large-scale spread of HIV in the Baltic Sea region is closing rapidly. In just three years the number of HIV infections has tripled in the countries bordering the eastern Baltic Sea region, and there are strong indications of the epidemic rapidly gaining a foothold in an area previously characterized by low HIV prevalence. So far the epidemic remains contained to injecting drug users (IDUs) and their partners, but large populations of yet uninfected IDUs are at immediate risk of infection. Furthermore, the extremely high rates of sexually transmitted infections and the emergence of a bridging population of injecting sex workers indicate the potential for a more widespread epidemic. Vulnerable young people are particularly susceptible to the epidemics of HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted infections and injecting drug use.

A consultation on HIV/AIDS in the Baltic Sea Region, sponsored by the governments of Finland and the United States, was convened in Helsinki in December 1999. The meeting brought together government representatives, NGOs and UN Theme Groups on HIV/AIDS from Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and the Russian Federation, UNAIDS and its co-sponsors (UNICEF, UNDP, UNDCP, WHO and the World Bank) as well as representatives of the European Union, the Nordic Council, the governments of Denmark, Finland, Norway, Poland and Sweden, USAID and the Open Society Institute.

It was agreed that a sub-regional strategy and action plan, reflecting local priorities in the three Baltic States and the Russian Federation, be developed with support from the UNAIDS Secretariat, USAID and UN Theme Groups. The resulting strategy and action plan would be shared with relevant agencies, bilateral donors and other partners to seek adequate resources for implementation of the proposed HIV prevention interventions, including expansion of selected programmes in order to achieve increased coverage.

In January/February 2000, a USAID consultant, with overall support from the UNAIDS Secretariat, traveled to the region for consultations with local partners and to initiate a process to develop a sub-regional strategy including priority action plans for the period 2000-2004. As a first step, the strategic framework outlined below was prepared in dialogue with national partners, United Nations Theme Groups on HIV/AIDS, UNAIDS co-sponsors and USAID.

Following these technical consultations, action plans and proposals have been shared among partners in the Baltic states and the two Russian regions, UN Theme Groups, the UNAIDS Secretariat, UNICEF, WHO, USAID and the Soros Foundation. The present Baltic Sea Action Plan has been formulated on the basis of the various consultations, and submitted project proposals.

The Action Plan was endorsed by the Governments of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania at a consultation held in Riga in early May. A "Baltic Sea Declaration on HIV/AIDS Prevention" was signed and provides a framework for political and social

commitment to support implementation of the Action Plan. The Declaration is expected to be signed also by the local Governments of Kaliningrad and St. Petersburg.

Strategic approach

The overall aim of the Baltic Sea Action Plan is to support governments, local authorities and NGOs in their efforts to prevent a widespread HIV/AIDS epidemic through increased coverage and effectiveness of national and local responses to HIV among young people, in particular injecting drug users and other vulnerable groups. The most effective approach to prevent a further and rapid spread of HIV in the Baltic region is to concentrate resources on prevention programmes for “high risk” youth and simultaneously support health promotion programmes for all youth, with an emphasis on those most vulnerable. This approach will both reduce HIV transmission among those already at high risk and reduce the vulnerability of all youth for the future.

The approach utilizes three, complementary strategies and interventions to achieve the desired outcome and results by 2004:

- *The expansion of effective and sustainable HIV prevention programmes among IDU's to reach a minimum coverage level of 60%.*
- *The expansion of STI prevention and care programmes with specific focus on vulnerable groups.*
- *A comprehensive and sustainable health promotion programme for young people with emphasis on vulnerable groups.*

Guiding principles

The specific strategies and proposed interventions within the Baltic Sea Action Plan, as well as the international response, will be guided by the following two core principles:

- National programmes, including well articulated HIV/AIDS policies, constitute the backbone of an effective response, and
- Activities at the sub-regional level need to complement and support national programmes.

Value added of a sub-regional strategy

A coordinated sub-regional programme will add value to national responses and link multiple country-level efforts in responding to the epidemic. In particular, a sub-regional approach can accomplish the following:

- Improved support for horizontal networking between countries and regions;

- A joint pool of technical expertise, capacity and resources, with specific focus on sharing of “best practices” and lessons learned as well as updated information related to the HIV epidemic;
- Improved efficiency through mutually reinforcing programmes and projects with agencies working together;
- Targeted action on relevant cross-border issues;
- Strengthened advocacy and policy support for HIV/AIDS programmes through a common understanding and enabling environment.

Expected Outputs: Sub-Regional Level

The Helsinki consultation highlighted the benefits and value of a range of sub-regional programme and projects activities as a means to expand and enhance HIV/AIDS prevention programmes, and made specific recommendations in this regard. As a result of the subsequent consultations, a set of sub-regional initiatives are proposed as core components of the Baltic Sea Action Plan, addressing the three priority areas of concern. They include:

- The Baltic Sea Declaration on HIV/AIDS endorsed by governments and promoted throughout the sub-region and among international partners and donors;
- Sub-regional technical resource networks established for the three strategic priority areas, including rosters of experts in the relevant technical areas, means of communication (list server, newsletter, meetings, teleconferences etc), inventory of projects, joint monitoring and evaluation strategies;
- Joint work plans for Peer Education and Life skills Education;
- Sub-regional information center/website established;
- Training capacity in all relevant areas identified/established in sub-region/neighbouring countries;
- Sub-regional best practices determined, documented and disseminated;
- A Baltic Sea Action Plan coordination mechanism identified/established;
- IEC materials of relevance to the three strategic priorities developed and disseminated throughout the sub-region.

Baltic Sea Action Plan and Priority Interventions

Following the country and regional level consultations mentioned above, action plans and project proposals have been developed in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, as well as in the Kaliningrad and St. Petersburg regions. These reflect the common strategic framework for priority actions agreed upon in Helsinki, as well as overall national plans for HIV/AIDS prevention and relevant inter-agency programmes. Several activities, such as capacity building, envisage sub-regional collaboration among relevant partners in an effort to ensure efficient and sustainable responses to the HIV epidemic.

As all proposals share common objectives, strategies and expected outputs, they should be seen as components of the overall Baltic Sea Action Plan for HIV/AIDS Prevention. With regard to international support they have been designed to allow for donors to support individual or several of the proposed projects/activities. The sub-regional approach will be instrumental in strengthening the response to HIV/AIDS prevention at both country and inter-country levels. It will bring together a wide variety of partners, and through the partnership the regionality of the epidemic can be approached with the strategic priority interventions proposed in the Baltic Sea Action Plan.

THE BALTIC SEA INITIATIVE AND ACTION PLAN – HIV/AIDS PREVENTION IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION

1. Introduction

1.1 The Helsinki Consultation

A consultation on HIV/AIDS in the Baltic Sea Region, sponsored by the governments of Finland and the United States, was convened in Helsinki in December 1999. The meeting brought together government representatives, NGOs and UN Theme Groups on HIV/AIDS from Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and the Russian Federation, UNAIDS and its co-sponsors (UNICEF, UNDP, UNDCP, WHO and the World Bank) as well as representatives of the European Union, the Nordic Council, the governments of Denmark, Finland, Norway, Poland and Sweden, USAID and the Open Society Institute.

The Helsinki consultation was a first step in the follow-up to the Strategy Meeting to Better coordinate regional Support for National Responses to HIV/AIDS in Eastern & Central Europe, held in Geneva in early November 1999. The main objectives of the meeting were to facilitate a common understanding of the HIV epidemic in the Baltic Sea region, identify strategic priorities for a coordinated regional effort to support effective and sustainable national responses to the epidemic and explore possibilities for expanded international support from donors to the region. It was agreed that a sub-regional strategy and action plan, reflecting local priorities in the three Baltic States and the Russian Federation, be developed with support from the UNAIDS Secretariat, USAID and UN Theme Groups. The resulting strategy and action plan would be shared with relevant agencies, bilateral donors and other partners to seek adequate resources for implementation of the proposed HIV prevention interventions, including expansion of selected programmes in order to achieve increased coverage.

1.2 The Process

Earlier in the year, a USAID consultant, with overall support from the UNAIDS Secretariat, traveled to the region for consultations with local partners and to initiate a process to develop a sub-regional strategy including priority action plans for the period 2000-2004. As a first step, the strategic framework outlined below was prepared in dialogue with national partners, United Nations Theme Groups on HIV/AIDS, UNAIDS co-sponsors and USAID. Technical consultations were organized in the Baltic states with support from UN Theme Groups and in Kaliningrad and St. Petersburg with UNAIDS support. The consultations brought together strategic partners, representing relevant ministries, national AIDS Centres, medical institutes and NGOs with the objective to establish local priorities and develop specific action plans to expand interventions as well as mechanisms for cross-country collaboration within the sub-region.

Following these technical consultations, action plans and proposals have been shared among partners in the Baltic states and the two Russian regions, UN Theme Groups, the UNAIDS Secretariat, UNICEF, WHO, USAID and the Soros Foundation. The present Baltic Sea Action Plan and project proposals have been formulated on the basis of the various consultations, action plans and specific drafts submitted.

The Action Plan was endorsed by the Governments of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania at a consultation held in Riga, Latvia, in early May. A “Baltic Sea Declaration on HIV/AIDS Prevention” was adopted, providing a framework for political and social commitment to support full implementation of the Action Plan. The local Governments of the Kaliningrad and St. Petersburg regions are expected to sign the Declaration within the near future.

2. RATIONALE

2.1 The scope and dynamics of the epidemic in the region

In a context of recent economic crisis, increasing poverty levels, unemployment and income disparities and rapid social changes, simultaneous epidemics of HIV infection, sexually transmitted infections (STI) and drug use are rapidly spreading in the Baltic Sea region and other parts of Eastern Europe.

The world’s steepest HIV infection curve in 1999 was recorded in Eastern Europe. The estimated number of infected persons increased by one third, from 270,000 to a total of 360,000. The vast majority of HIV positive cases are found among injecting drug users and their partners in a growing number of cities in the newly independent states while HIV infection remains rare in drug injecting populations in other cities and in the population at large.

While there are local differences in the stage of the epidemic among the countries and areas of the region, including Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and the districts of St. Petersburg and Kaliningrad, they all share common patterns and trends. Initially, the first wave of HIV infection occurred mainly among men who have sex with men (MSM) but in recent years this pattern has been superseded by a much larger spread of infection among injecting drug users (IDUs).

As of March 2000, the Russian Federation has reported a cumulative total number of 38,872 cases of HIV infection. Almost half of the cases, 15,462, were reported during 1999 and more than half of these among IDUs. During the first two months of 2000, 6,818 new cases were reported. Russian health authorities estimate that the total number of HIV infected persons may be 10 times as high. Given an estimated total of 1–2.5 million highly susceptible drug injectors in the Russian Federation, there is a considerable potential for further rapid spread of HIV in this group and in the general population.

The Russian territory of Kaliningrad was the first in the region to experience a massive outbreak of HIV infection among injecting drug users in 1996. Kaliningrad

remains the most affected area in the region with a total of 2,589 cases of infection reported as of November 1999. In St Petersburg, Russia, the number of cases found through routine testing remains low compared with other cities, with 692 cases reported as of November 1999. However, a recent WHO/UNAIDS situation assessment report found a prevalence of 12% among IDUs, indicating that HIV is now spreading rapidly.

So far HIV prevalence has remained at much lower levels in the Baltic States, but there is a similar trend of growing spread of HIV, mainly caused by unsafe injections. As of March 2000, Lithuania has reported a total of 185 cases, with 66 new cases during 1999, approximately 50% of whom were injecting drug users. Latvia had a total of 492 HIV cases, with 241 new cases during 1999, and reported a prevalence rate of 11% among a group of 350 registered drug users. Estonia has reported a total of 96 cases of HIV, with 12 new cases in 1999, none among injecting drug users. Currently there are estimated 8,000 to 10,000 drug users in Estonia, 20,000 in Latvia, and 12,000 in Lithuania, but the numbers are growing.

Since the 1990s, most of the newly independent states have experienced a dramatic growth in the number of reported syphilis cases, with rates per 100,000 population reaching 270 in the Russian Federation in 1997, 122 per 100,000 in Latvia, 85 in Lithuania and 72 in Estonia. The alarming rates of sexually transmitted infections point to the potential for wide scale sexual transmission of HIV, in terms of prevalence of sexual risk behaviour and increased vulnerability to HIV infection.

Overall, young people in their 20's are particularly affected by the HIV epidemic. In several cities up to 25% of IDUs are teenagers, and another 40% are young adults. As for syphilis, rates have increased dramatically among women between the ages of 20 to 25, but there have also been large increases among adolescents. Cases of mother-to-child transmission have also been recorded.

2.2 A closing window of opportunity

A window of opportunity to prevent a large-scale spread of HIV infection among the growing and highly susceptible drug injecting populations and to the general population is closing rapidly. Urgent prevention measures must be taken now as the region is at high risk of facing a widespread and devastating epidemic.

HIV does not respect borders. The epidemiological situation in one country will affect other countries in the region. Countries in the sub-region share specific patterns and characteristics of the HIV epidemic, including its concentration among injecting drug users. There exists a long tradition of horizontal networking on HIV/AIDS between the countries in the sub-region, providing great potential for cost-effective sharing of resources and experience. An effective sub-regional strategy will add value to national responses and link multiple in-country strategies in responding to the epidemic as well as allow for a strategic and tactical allocation of resources.

2.3 National and Local Responses in the Baltic Sea Region

National responses to date include interventions that target the most vulnerable groups, particularly injecting drug users (IDUs), commercial sex workers and youth. A few interventions also target men having sex with men (MSM) and prisoners. However, programmes in place have limited coverage of the respective target populations and need to be expanded in order to have wider impact.

A major constraint in all countries continues to be that HIV/AIDS is still mainly perceived as a medical problem and has not yet been given appropriate multi-sectoral attention and support. The vertical health care structures constitute obstacles for HIV/STI prevention and care. Collaboration between national AIDS Centres and narcology services, for example, is often sporadic and cross-ministerial coordination and collaboration is lacking. Consequently, many interventions are implemented in isolation and information, as well as lessons learned, not widely disseminated. A number of NGO projects are suffering from a lack of coordination and effective synergy with other initiatives. Furthermore, as a result of the on-going economic crisis, budgets for health and social services programmes, including HIV/AIDS activities, have been cut. Within the health sectors, HIV/AIDS programmes need to absorb costs for both prevention and costly antiretroviral therapy. Consequently, HIV/AIDS programmes in the Baltic states and in the Kaliningrad and St. Petersburg regions of the Russian Federation are underfunded and understaffed. Other constraints include knowledge gaps with regard to sexual behaviour among high-risk populations, especially out-of-school youth, as well as patterns of drug use.

The sub-regional strategy will not only target epicenters to reduce transmission within those, but also identify potential new epicenters and put prevention efforts in place before the epidemic arrives.

2.4 International Responses

As the leading advocate for worldwide action against HIV/AIDS, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) seeks to lead, coordinate and support an expanded response to the epidemic. It brings together the resources, expertise and networks of influence of its co-sponsors – UNICEF, UNFPA, UNDP, UNDCP, UNESCO, WHO and the World Bank. At country level, UNAIDS works through UN Theme Groups on HIV/AIDS, which have been established in all countries of the Baltic Sea region. These include representatives of UN agencies, governments and other partners. The key functions of the Theme Groups are in the areas of strategic planning, data collection, advocacy and resource mobilization. Strategic planning provides a tool for countries to identify national priorities and needs and is an important point of reference for coordinated and integrated planning of international support. Such a process is currently underway in the Russian Federation, including Kaliningrad and St. Petersburg.

In recent years, international assistance to the sub-region has increasingly included support for HIV prevention programmes and several projects specifically focus on prevention for high-risk groups.

In the area of **harm reduction**, the Open Society Institute (OSI) is the major donor and partner through its International Harm Reduction Development Program. Projects include drop-in services and needle exchange, condom distribution, methadone treatment, support for drug related legislation and education in Russia and the Baltic states. Other donors and partners include the European Union (primarily through the TACIS programme), Finland, Sweden, the United States (USAID), the UNAIDS Secretariat, UNDP, UNDCP and Medecins du Monde. Most projects were initiated in the late 1990's and most are implemented through national Narcology Centres or AIDS Centres.

Despite the multitude of projects and partners, a very small number of injecting drug users are reached. In Estonia and Latvia, for example, harm reduction programmes reach only 15 and 5 percent of drug users respectively. In some countries legal restrictions regarding needle exchange, for example, constitute obstacles to achieving greater coverage of harm reduction activities. Societal attitudes toward drug users have a negative impact on policies and services and financial resources are lacking, as is often the political will to expand programmes. With regard to projects underway, a lack of coordination between local as well as international partners result in duplication of efforts, information gaps and even different approaches to harm reduction. In some cases, international funding of projects is secured only through the end of the year 2000.

Prevention programmes among young people are supported through a common strategic programming framework of UNFPA, UNICEF, UNAIDS, UNDCP and WHO. These focus on life skills education, youth friendly health services, substance abuse prevention and projects targeting especially vulnerable children and youth. Several projects address the factors contributing to risk-taking behaviour including unprotected sex, intravenous drug use, other substance abuse, social exclusion and exploitation.

UNICEF, WHO and the UNAIDS Secretariat conducted a joint mission in Estonia and Latvia in April 1999 to investigate ways in which they could support efforts of government, NGOs and civil society to address the needs of youth. Separate missions have also visited Lithuania, Kaliningrad and St. Petersburg. These provide opportunities to enhance work in areas where UN presence is limited, and to coordinate interagency support and advocate in country with government, NGOs and civil society for additional support to initiatives addressing young people's health, development and protection. To this end, the Inter-Agency Group on Young People's Health, Development and Protection, comprising UNICEF, the UNAIDS Secretariat, UNFPA and WHO, was set up to strengthen collaboration between partners and country and regional levels and provide technical assistance. Through these mechanisms and enhanced work with UN Theme Groups on HIV/AIDS, it was possible to initiate multi-sectoral fora, training in rapid assessment and response to HIV/AIDS, STI and substance abuse, life skills

education; peer education and youth mobilization. A sub-regional focal point has been established through a joint UNDP/UNICEF effort.

UNFPA, is a key partner in the area of **STI prevention and care**, and supports a large number of clinic-based projects as components of its STD transmission prevention and management programme. Given the urgent need to address weak interpersonal and counseling skills, UNFPA includes information, education and communication (IEC) components in all interventions. Programmes also tackle the issue from an adolescent health perspective, with HIV/AIDS prevention as part sex education components. In the Kaliningrad and St. Petersburg regions, WHO, USAID, Finland and Sweden support capacity-building, research and peer education in the areas of adolescent sexuality and reproductive health.

The absence of cross-sectoral approaches in addressing the HIV epidemic and lack of coordination at national levels are reflected in international responses as well. In many areas, a multitude of small-scale projects have been initiated in isolation from each other and without linkages to comprehensive action plans and with questionable sustainability.

In 1999, the UN Theme Groups were encouraged to broaden memberships to include other key international stakeholders such as bilateral agencies, international NGOs as well as national partners. Bilateral agencies and international NGOs are encouraged to seek coordination through existing mechanisms and tools. External support to national responses can be greatly enhanced through effective work within the Theme Groups or similar mechanisms, resulting in improved coordination, stronger advocacy, availability of relevant data and assistance in identifying and addressing national priorities and needs through the development and implementation of national strategic plans.

In recognizing the need for further expansion of existing programmes and activities, as well as improved coordination and collaboration, the Baltic Sea Action Plan builds on programmes and partnerships already in place. Some of the most important components of the proposed plans and activities aim at scaling up responses or new and improved collaboration between strategic partners at the national and local levels. Priority is given to sub-regional cross-border cooperation in areas including capacity building, information exchange and technical assistance.

3. STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK AND SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

The overall aim of the Baltic Sea Action Plan is to support governments, local authorities and NGOs in their efforts to prevent a widespread HIV/AIDS epidemic through increased coverage and effectiveness of national and local responses to HIV among young people, in particular injecting drug users and other vulnerable young people.

Specific objectives:

- To support expansion of effective and sustainable HIV prevention programmes among injecting drug users to a minimum coverage level of 60% in all countries/oblasts of the sub-region by 2004;
- To support the expansion of affordable and accessible STI prevention and care services for vulnerable groups, including injecting drug users, sex workers, men who have sex with men and other vulnerable young people in all countries/oblasts of the sub-region by 2004;
- To support the development of effective, comprehensive and sustainable health promotion programmes for young people, with emphasis on vulnerable groups, in all countries/oblasts of the sub-region by 2004.

4. PROGRAMME APPROACH

The most effective approach to prevent a further and rapid spread of HIV in the Baltic region is to concentrate resources on prevention programmes for “high risk” youth and simultaneously support health promotion programmes for all youth, with an emphasis on those most vulnerable. This approach will both reduce HIV transmission among those already at high risk and reduce the vulnerability of all youth for the future.

This approach utilizes three, complementary strategies and interventions to achieve the desired outcome and results by 2004:

- *The expansion of effective and sustainable HIV prevention programmes among IDU's to reach a minimum coverage level of 60%.*

HIV can spread rapidly through IDU populations and, if unchecked, eventually into the general population. Effective prevention programmes, reaching a majority of drug users, including prison populations, could greatly reduce HIV transmission and prevent its further spread.

- *The expansion of STI prevention and care programmes with specific focus on vulnerable groups.*

The presence of STIs in youth populations greatly increases their vulnerability to HIV infection. The expansion of “youth friendly” STI prevention and control programmes would reduce this mode of transmission.

- *A comprehensive and sustainable health promotion programme for young people with emphasis on vulnerable groups.*

Finally, the development of a comprehensive health promotion programme for all young people will increase the effectiveness of interventions targeting specific vulnerable groups by educating all youth to the risks associated with drug use and unsafe sexual behaviour and informing them how to receive additional information and support services.

4.1 Guiding principles

The specific strategies and proposed interventions within the Baltic Sea Action Plan, as well as the international response, will be guided by the following two core principles:

- National programmes, including well articulated HIV/AIDS policies, constitute the backbone of an effective response, and
- Activities at the sub-regional level need to complement and support national programmes.

Short-term strategies will focus on cost-effective targeting of high-risk behaviours while supporting overall prevention interventions. Longer-term strategies comprise capacity building, surveillance, IEC (information, education and communications) and research. To achieve the specific objectives, the Baltic Sea Action Plan will support implementation of the following strategies and interventions addressing the three priority areas requiring immediate attention:

4.2 Expansion of effective and sustainable HIV prevention programmes among IDUs to a minimum coverage level of 60% by 2004

Guiding principles

The above-mentioned specific objective of the Baltic Sea Action Plan will be addressed based on the following internationally recognized principles and best practices:

- Early intervention – it is vital and very cost effective to act, while HIV prevalence is still low, and not wait until the epidemic is widespread
- No single measure can be effective on its own. There is a need for a comprehensive package of measures, including provision of sterile injecting equipment, by far the most effective prevention measure against increased infection
- Outreach work and peer education is the most effective way to reach injecting drug users, involving trained people from outside the drug user community as well as trained former or current injecting drug users

- HIV prevention interventions must reach a majority of injecting drug users to have an impact on the epidemic.
- Reduction of demand is, along with reducing the harm, an important parallel strategy to reduce the demand for drugs, preventing young people from starting to take drugs in the first place through life-skills and peer education in schools as well as out-of-school settings and encouraging those already using them to stop, through participation in effective treatment programmes.

Specific strategies

The Helsinki consultation recommended the following strategies for scaling up prevention coverage for injecting drug users in an effective and sustainable way:

Advocacy

To scale up existing efforts, there is an urgent need to strengthen advocacy prevention among injecting drug users, local governments, the general public and international partners. Efforts should be made to document the cost effectiveness and benefits of HIV prevention among injecting drug users for society at large. The stigmatisation and social marginalization of injecting drug users constitute major barriers for public support to HIV prevention, and should be counteracted. Proposed activities include:

- Roundtable discussions with policymakers, hosted by the UNAIDS Cosponsors, and
- Peer education among other government authorities and experts in the region.
- Mobilization of parents by improving counselling and psychosocial support services for families
- Media campaigns targeting the general public.

Building local capacity

Maximum efforts should be made to create a pool of local expertise and human resources, and reduce dependency on external technical assistance. This requires making optimal use of the considerable expertise, skills and experience already accumulated in the region, and create mechanisms to share it across borders. The possibility of establishing training centers at regional, country and oblast levels, e.g. at universities, should be explored. Former and current drug users should be trained as peer educators and out reach workers. Efforts should be made to involve parents and government staff in programmes run by NGOs, to make use of their experiences, and as part of the above-mentioned advocacy strategy. Efforts should be made to facilitate and support the creation of interest and self help groups of injecting drug users and people living with HIV/AIDS. There is also a need to explore effective outreach to young IDU's.

Developing comprehensive national and local strategies

The development of comprehensive responses should be based on rapid situational assessments, identifying characteristics of the drug using populations, the context of drug injecting, the patterns of sharing, constraining and facilitating factors to safer drug

injecting and drug using behaviour, availability and use of existing services, and the societal or community attitudes towards use/users. The full range of harm reduction approaches should be employed including, among others:

- Needle exchange, substitution treatment and condom promotion
- Improve quality and accessibility of health and social services.
- Special attention to prison populations who are particularly vulnerable to drug and sex related HIV infections

Harm reduction should be part of a broad set of prevention strategies, including, in an appropriate mix, demand reduction through prevention of drug use and, if resources permit, improved drug treatment and rehabilitation services. A supportive and favourable legislative environment should be ensured through reviews and improvements of existing legislation related to HIV/AIDS and injecting drug use.

Utilize existing resources and platforms.

Cognisance should be taken of the wide range of resources and platforms available. This include the technical resources and know-how within the UNAIDS Task Force on HIV Prevention Among Injecting Drug Users in Eastern Europe, and the Central and Eastern European Harm Reduction Network. The UNDCP demand reduction declaration and action plan have been endorsed by many governments as a comprehensive framework for reducing demand and adverse consequences of drug abuse, and should be adapted at country level. Negative as well as positive lessons from the region should be documented and shared. An inventory of existing pilot projects and activities should be created to encourage sharing of experiences, skills and information across countries and to identify gaps, shortcoming and duplication.

Coordination mechanisms

A technical working group on HIV prevention among injecting drug users will be established in each country and oblasts, including representatives of governments, local NGOs, and the drug user community.

4.3 Expanded STI prevention and care programmes with specific focus on vulnerable groups, including IDUs, sex workers, vulnerable youth, and men having sex with men at national and local levels in the sub-region by 2004.

Guiding Principles

- STI prevention and control is the most important mechanism to prevent widespread heterosexual transmission of HIV
- Integration of HIV/STI prevention and services to improve efficiency and halt further spread of the epidemics

Strategies

The Helsinki consultation recommended that each national government develop a plan to cover other vulnerable groups with a comprehensive prevention programme by 2004. Such a programme would provide:

- Access to early diagnosis and effective treatment of STIs, e.g. through integrated reproductive health and STI services and user friendly services for groups at special risk
- Voluntary HIV counseling and testing services
- Behavior Change Communication/Condoms

Through the Baltic Sea Action Plan, The Task Force for the Urgent Response to the Epidemics of Sexually Transmitted Infections in Eastern Europe (STI Task Force) and other organizations with expertise in providing prevention services to CSWs and other vulnerable groups would identify and disseminate “best practices” from the region that could be replicated and would identify, where possible, existing regional resources to provide technical assistance and training to implement such a programme in each country and/or oblast. The programme would be implemented by a mix of public and NGO organizations. It would first be implemented in the largest urban centers and the main transportation nodes. Initially, the priority target group will be CSWs.

Improving the Legal and Policy Environment

To effectively implement prevention programmes, national and local governments need to establish a positive, supportive legal and regulatory environment. Through the Baltic Sea Action Plan, the UN Theme Groups, in collaboration with international donors and national AIDS Control Programmes, will advocate to:

- Make HIV/AIDS/STI prevention a high national and regional priority
- Remove legal and regulatory constraints related to HIV, STI and injecting drug use for provision of HIV/STI information and services
- Improve STI diagnosis, treatment and counselling guidelines as well as practices
- Foster collaboration between ministries of health and education to promote life skills and peer education

Advocacy for a favourable policy environment can be accomplished through the organization of regional meetings to raise awareness among policy makers and the provision, upon request, of model guidelines and technical assistance to adopt such guidelines to fit national or regional needs.

4.4 Comprehensive prevention programmes for young people with emphasis on vulnerable youth

Guiding principles

The following principles will guide interventions within the Baltic Sea Action Plan targeting youth:

Young people have the right to:

- A safe and supportive environment created by parents, schools, peers and service providers;
- Define their own responsibilities, and help to build skills to live up to those responsibilities so that they are able to play a meaningful part in the decision-making processes that affect them;
- Information to make healthy choices in life – to protect themselves from HIV/AIDS, STIs, injecting drug use and other substance abuse;
- Services and opportunities (education, health, recreation and participation) that cater to the needs of young people that are accessible, and confidential as appropriate.

Strategies

The Helsinki consultation recommended the following strategies for scaling up prevention programmes targeting young people:

The development and implementation of a national programme to incorporate life skills elements in formal and non-formal settings

In order to prevent substance abuse and/or risky sexual behavior among young people, it is critical that governments incorporate a life skills and health education components in curricula at every level of the public school system. Presently, several donor and UN agencies are working independently to either design or implement on a pilot basis such curricula. Within the framework of the Baltic Sea Action Plan, The UN Inter-agency Group on Young People's Health, Development and Protection in Europe and Central Asia will organize a working group to review current efforts and recommend the most effective curricula to implement on a national scale. Ideally, these curricula would include:

- Life skills and health education components
- A peer-to-peer education component for both formal and non-formal sectors
- Information on community (youth-friendly) and reproductive health services
- The IAG recommends life-skills and peer education also in settings beyond the class room, i.e. street education

The UN Inter-agency Group has developed a joint work plan for peer education the sub-region that is closely linked with a parallel programme on life skills education within the framework of the European Network of Health Promoting Schools. The UN Inter-agency Group plans to provide technical assistance and training to support the design and implementation of national programs and stimulate sub-regional collaboration.

The design and implementation of a mass media campaign targeted at youth

The appropriate group would design a regional theme, based upon the “healthy lifestyles curriculum, which would then be adopted to each country and broadcast through the government and, to the extent possible, the private media network.

4.5 Value added of a sub-regional strategy

A coordinated sub-regional programme will add value to national responses and link multiple country-level efforts in responding to the epidemic. In particular, a sub-regional approach can accomplish the following:

- Improved support for horizontal networking between countries and regions;
- A joint pool of technical expertise, capacity and resources, with specific focus on sharing of “best practices” and lessons learned as well as updated information related to the HIV epidemic;
- Improved efficiency through mutually reinforcing programmes and projects with agencies working together;
- Targeted action on relevant cross-border issues;
- Strengthened advocacy and policy support for HIV/AIDS programmes through a common understanding and enabling environment.

5. EXPECTED OUTPUTS: SUB-REGIONAL LEVEL

The Helsinki consultation highlighted the benefits and value of a range of sub-regional programme and projects activities as a means to expand and enhance HIV/AIDS prevention programmes, and made specific recommendations in this regard. As a result of the subsequent consultations, a set of sub-regional initiatives are proposed as core components of the Baltic Sea Action Plan, addressing the three priority areas of concern. They include:

- The Baltic Sea Declaration on HIV/AIDS endorsed by governments and promoted throughout the sub-region and among international partners and donors;
- Sub-regional technical resource networks established for the three strategic priority areas, including rosters of experts in the relevant technical areas, means of communication (list server, newsletter, meetings, teleconferences etc), inventory of projects, joint monitoring and evaluation strategies;
- Joint work plans for Peer Education and Life skills Education;
- Sub-regional information center/website established;
- Training capacity in all relevant areas identified/established in sub-region/neighbouring countries;
- Sub-regional best practices determined, documented and disseminated;
- A Baltic Sea Action Plan coordination mechanism identified/established;
- IEC materials of relevance to the three strategic priorities developed and disseminated throughout the sub-region.

6. BALTIC SEA ACTION PLAN AND PRIORITY INTERVENTIONS

Following the country and regional level consultations mentioned above, action plans and project proposals have been developed in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, as well as in the Kaliningrad and St. Petersburg regions. These reflect the common strategic framework for priority actions agreed upon in Helsinki, as well as overall national plans for HIV/AIDS prevention and relevant inter-agency programmes. Several activities, such as capacity building, envisage sub-regional collaboration among relevant partners in an effort to ensure efficient and sustainable responses to the HIV epidemic.

Below follows a summary of the action plans and proposals submitted through United Theme Groups on HIV/AIDS in the Baltic states and the Russian Federation for the Kaliningrad and St. Petersburg regions of the Russian Federation. As all proposals share common objectives, strategies and expected outputs, they should be seen as components of the overall Baltic Sea Action Plan for HIV/AIDS Prevention. With regard to international support they have been designed to allow for donors to support individual or several of the proposed projects/activities. The sub-regional approach will be instrumental in strengthening the response to HIV/AIDS prevention at both country and inter-country levels. It will bring together a wide variety of partners, and through the partnership the regionality of the epidemic can be approached with the strategic priority interventions proposed in the Baltic Sea Action Plan.

7. SUB-REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

HIV Prevention among IDUs

In an effort to improve HIV prevention programmes among injecting drug users throughout the sub-region, a regional training project has been proposed by the Lithuanian Association of Addiction Psychiatry. The project will provide training for frontline workers from all countries and regions/oblasts on relevant topics, including performance and evaluation techniques, counseling drug treatment, HIV and human rights and law enforcement. The sub-regional training activities will provide valuable opportunities for exchange of best practices and foster cross-border cooperation. In addition, information, education and communication materials on HIV and safer practices will be adapted and made available in the Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian and Russian languages.

An exchange of professional experience and work methods, involving 20 staff representatives, is planned between organizations working in the area of harm reduction and HIV prevention among IDUs in St. Petersburg and Kaliningrad.

Total amount requested: USD 21,600

Expansion of STI Prevention and Care Programmes

At the sub-regional level, the Task Force for the Urgent Response to the Epidemics of Sexually Transmitted Infections in Eastern Europe plans to identify and disseminate “best practices”. These will focus specifically on services targeting commercial sex workers and other vulnerable groups. Several interventions in the areas of HIV prevention among IDUs and programmes for young people also address the epidemics of sexually transmitted infections. In addition, UN Theme Groups will provide support to efforts to establish a supportive legal environment, which will include sub-regional consultations, seminars and workshops.

Total amount requested: USD 100,000

Health Promotion and Prevention Programmes for Young People

In the area of health promotion and prevention for young people, the Inter-Agency Group on Young People’s Health, Development and Protection (UNAIDS, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and WHO) has developed a comprehensive sub-regional plan for peer education as a vehicle for motivating and involving young people in their own health and development. Specific emphasis will be put on activities involving vulnerable populations (IDUs, sex workers and street children). The initiative, implemented in collaboration with Family Health International, will involve country level mobilization of peer educators, the development of training materials and sub-regional training and capacity building through a series of workshops. Expansion of life-skills work to settings beyond schools is under development. Support to technical capacity building for training and implementation in rapid assessment responses in areas related to risk behaviours and substance abuse is on-going.

The peer education programme will be closely linked to a joint effort in the area of life skills and its integration into formal education structures, as well as non-school settings, through the European Network of Health Promoting Schools. UNICEF, WHO and UNFPA plan to support a sub-regional process to integrate life skills into national school curricula, promote sharing of experience, quality control and technical support mechanisms. Main components will include sub-regional consultations for policy makers representing ministries of education and health, technical assistance to ministries and support to training of teacher educators. Joint missions and joint ministerial conferences are also planned for the Baltic Sea Region.

Total amount (already funded): USD 200,000 (life-skills), USD 250,000 (peer education)

8. COUNTRY LEVEL INTERVENTIONS

ESTONIA

Proposed Priority Interventions for 2000-2004 and Expected Outputs:

HIV prevention and rehabilitation among injecting drug users through expansion of existing programmes

The AIDS Information and Support Centre – with local branches – will expand outreach programmes, including needle exchange, counselling and training of staff and mobile units in four cities and towns outside Tallinn to reach 4,800 IDUs (representing 60% of an estimated total number of 8,000). The model of using a bus or van, used in St. Petersburg, will be used and the project will draw on lessons learned from similar activities in St. Petersburg. Local governments and the Open Estonia Foundation will co-fund the project together with the AIDS Prevention Centre.

The NGO Parents Against Drugs, the AIDS Information and Support Centre and the Association of Young Psychologists plans a collaborative effort to expand rehabilitation services for IDUs in three locations. The state programme on drug prevention will provide co-funding and the project will comprise both rehabilitation and vocational training to facilitate social reintegration.

Total amount requested: USD 144,000 (two years)

HIV prevention among commercial sex workers

The AIDS Information and Support Centre plans a continuation and expansion of a project targeting commercial sex workers. Components include medical, psychological and legal counselling, HIV/STI screening, STI treatment, condom distribution and safe sex education. Linkages and collaboration with the Latvian Gender Problems Centre and the Lithuanian project “Demetra” is envisaged.

Total amount requested: USD 70,000 (two years)

HIV Prevention in Prisons

The Estonian AIDS Prevention Centre is planning HIV prevention activities targeting prisoners. The objective of the project is to prevent the spread of HIV in prisons among injecting drug users, men who have sex with men, and among prisoners through monitoring the situation in prison (Central Prison), training of medical as well as non-medical prison staff and volunteers, and making counseling, voluntary and confidential testing, informative materials, sterile equipment and condoms available for inmates.

Total amount requested (two years): USD 67,600

HIV Information Hotline Service and Internet Information

In order to promote HIV/AIDS awareness and improve the quality of sexual health, the AIDS Prevention Centre plans to introduce information activities through the establishment of hotlines and Internet services. The main objective is to make the information and education on public health and sexuality available to everybody. Both services will be bilingual (Estonian and Russian). Two staff members of the AIDS Prevention Centre, as well as volunteers, will be trained to manage and maintain the services. Information activities and the preparation of materials will be coordinated with other Estonian organizations working in the area of HIV/AIDS.

Total amount requested: USD 30,000 (two years)

Support programmes for people living with HIV

The Estonian Positives' Society (ESPO) offers psychological support to people with HIV, organizes self-help groups and facilitates contacts among people living with HIV in the region. Financial and technical support is provided by the AIDS Prevention Program of Estonia.

Total amount requested: USD 16,000 (two years)

Peer Education Project

The Estonian NGO "Living for Tomorrow" plans a peer education project aiming to involve young people in awareness raising activities with emphasis on health life styles and sexual health. The project will include outreach work in schools building on the training of 35 young people on the various issues. Other components comprise street based outreach work, using information materials to be developed, condom distribution and informal information sessions. Staff members of "Living for Tomorrow" have received sexual educational training through the Nordic Institute for Women's Studies and Gender Research in Norway.

Total amount requested: USD 6,870 (one year)

Integration and tolerance initiatives

The Estonian Media Centre, in collaboration with the AIDS Prevention Centre, UNDP and the Integration Foundation, plans a media seminar on integration issues for journalists with the objective to promote integration of minorities in the Baltic region and increased awareness about the importance of integration and tolerance. A regional seminar on tolerance, with specific focus on sexual orientation and issues around drug abuse, disability, and stigma related to HIV/AIDS, is also planned in order to promote tolerance and understanding of diversity. Journalists from Latvia, Lithuania and Russia will also attend.

Total amount requested: USD 32,000 (two years)

STI Information Materials

The Estonian Union against Sexually Transmitted Infections, a member of the regional STI Task Force, plans an information campaign to raise awareness around sexually transmitted infections. A brochure with clear and simple medical information, risky behaviour, safe choices and services available will be developed and distributed throughout Estonia in both the Estonian and Russian languages.

Total amount requested: USD 8,000 (2000)

Awareness campaign on Gay and Lesbian Issues

A collaboration between The Estonian Gay League, The Estonian Association for Lesbian and Bisexual Women aims at raising awareness and tolerance around sexual orientation and related issues. The strategy to be used will be to prepare and distribute information materials in both Estonian and Russian, specifically targeting teachers, youth counsellors and other relevant groups. Foreign materials, including recent Russian literature on these subjects, will be used and in some cases translated for the project.

Total amount requested: USD 13,300 (2000)

Grand total amount for Estonia 2000-2002: USD 283,000

LATVIA

Proposed Priority Interventions for 2000-2004 and Expected Outputs:

The establishment of outreach/counseling services for IDUs in highly affected regions

The project will establish outreach/counseling services in 10 cities and towns throughout Latvia through collaboration between the National Narcology Centre, the AIDS Prevention Center and local governments. The interventions seek to reach 12,000 IDUs, representing 60% of the estimated total of 20,000. Components will also include training of personnel, needle exchange programmes and psychosocial services.

Total amount requested: USD 512,000 (two years)

Prevention and treatment programmes among IDUs in prisons:

Two prison units for the treatment and rehabilitation of imprisoned drug addicts will be established by the Prison Department in collaboration with the National Narcology Centre and the AIDS Prevention Centre. Specialized training in counseling and drug treatment of prison inmates will be provided for prison staff, including doctors, psychiatrists and social workers.

Total amount requested: USD 337,000 (two years)

Prevention programmes with focus on young people

A variety of partners, including the Ministry of Education, the Latvian Red Cross, youth NGOs, the AIDS Prevention Centre and UNESCO, will be collaborate in the development of training materials and training of teachers as well as volunteers for incorporation of life skills and health issues in both formal and non-formal settings. Peer education will be a major component of the project. Specific projects will target vulnerably youth, such as street children, through support centers and outreach work. Partners include the State Centre for the Protection of Child Rights, the NGO “Youth Against AIDS” and UNICEF. In addition, youth friendly health services will be expanded by the Youth Health Centre Council of Latvia.

Total amount requested: USD 151,000 (two years)

Expansion of prevention and support programmes for men who have sex with men

Latvian youth NGOs, the Latvian Association for Safe Sex, Gay NGOs and the AIDS Prevention Centre plans to establish a support and information center for gay youth which will provide counseling, anonymous HIV testing, a web site and information material about HIV/AIDS and safe sex. Exchange and collaboration with similar projects and organizations in the other Baltic states and Russia is envisaged.

Total amount requested: USD 35,000 (two years)

Support for People with HIV

With the objective to expand a movement to support people with HIV, the organization AGIHAS plans to establish a support and information for people with HIV, their families and friends. The project will include counseling services, an open house – “House+” -, information activities and a hotline.

Total amount requested: USD 148,000 (two years)

STI/Reproductive Health and HIV/AIDS Prevention among women

A number of partners, including the National Sexually Transitive and Skin Disease Centre, the AIDS Prevention center, Youth NGOs and women’s groups, will collaborate on a massive information campaign aiming to raise awareness of sexually transmitted infections and HIV/AIDS, establish a hotline and develop mobile teams of gynecologists, psychologists and social workers for field work as well as specific training of NGO staff working with commercial sex workers, women having suffered violence and IDUs.

Total amount requested: USD 124,000 (two years)

Grand total amount for Latvia 2000-2002: USD 1,307,000

LITHUANIA

Proposed Priority Activities for 2000-2004 and Expected Outputs

Expansion of HIV prevention programmes among IDU's

Several institutions and organizations, including the Vilnius and Klaipeda Substance Abuse Treatment Centres, the Lithuanian AIDS Centre, municipal health care departments and community health centres, will be involved in an effort to expand outreach programmes for IDUs in all major cities and towns. These include needle exchange, methadone treatment, counselling, and condom distribution. The expanded interventions are expected to make services accessible to 7,200 IDUs, representing 60% of the estimated total of 12,000. In addition, the action plan also includes training of staff, peer education involving volunteers, hotline projects, the development of information, education and communication materials and advocacy for harm reduction efforts. Plans also call for the establishment of a national resource center HIV prevention among IDUs. Lithuanian institutions have received support for earlier phases of several projects from Soros/OSI (The Open Society Institute). Lithuanian partners seek to collaborate with organizations and institutions in the region in terms of exchange of best practices, training opportunities as well as technical support.

Total amount requested: USD 350,000 (two years)

Reproductive health education for teachers

The Family Planning and Sexual Health Association and the Governmental Education Departments, in collaboration with UNDP, plans a major training programme aiming at training 120 school teachers in all areas of sexual and reproductive health, including HIV/AIDS and family planning. A "training of trainers" approach will be used to enable trained teachers to educate colleagues on these issues and achieve even greater impact. Relevant training materials will be developed during the first phase of the project, followed by a series of workshops for teachers.

Total amount requested: USD 20,000 (two years)

HIV Prevention Among Commercial Sex Workers

The Lithuanian AIDS Centre, the Ministry of Health and local NGOs plan an expansion of prevention and outreach work among commercial sex workers. The project will focus on HIV/STI testing and STI treatment services, counselling and peer education with the help of volunteers through the establishment of drop in centres in 5 cities and towns. In addition, educational materials will be produced in both Lithuanian and Russian and advocacy activities will be undertaken. The project will build on initial experience from the first outreach project "Demetra" located in Vilnius and establish links with similar projects in Estonia and Latvia.

Total amount requested: USD 10,000

HIV Prevention Among Men Who Have Sex With Men

Given the relative isolation of the gay population in Lithuania, and prevailing intolerance, the Lithuanian AIDS Centre plans to continue its support to emerging gay organizations and their efforts to promote AIDS awareness and safe sexual behaviour. The support will include publication of newsletters and information materials, workshops, outreach work, condoms and lubricants, fundraising events and the establishment of a Gay Hotline to provide information and counselling.

Total amount requested: USD 9,000 (one year)

Gender and HIV in the Context of Human Development Implications of the Epidemic

Through a wide-range partnership including, among others, the Lithuanian AIDS Foundation, the Vilnius Municipality, Vilnius University, local NGOs and UNDP, the project seeks to support the establishment of NGOs working with women/families affected by HIV/AIDS in order to mitigate the socio-economic impact of the epidemic, particularly on women. Project components will include the setting up of networks of groups working with women to expand capacity building, counseling, sharing of experience and the creation of self-support groups, advocacy and legal/human rights. The Department of Social Affairs will provide in kind support.

Total amount requested: USD 10,000 (one year)

Mass Media Actions

With the objective to raise the general public's awareness of HIV/AIDS and related issues, the Lithuanian AIDS Centre seeks to strengthen its collaboration with, and support to, mass media in terms of training of journalists, production of radio and TV spots on HIV/AIDS and relevant advertising.

Total amount requested: USD 15,700

Grand total amount for Lithuania: USD 404,700

THE CITY OF ST. PETERSBURG AND KALININGRAD REGION – RUSSIAN FEDERATION

The City of St. Petersburg and the Kaliningrad region are partners to the Strategic Planning Project (SPP) implemented in Russia in 1998 – 2000 with technical and financial support from UNAIDS. In the first phase of the process, an integrated situation and response analysis was undertaken to provide foundation for the formulation of the national strategy to respond to HIV/AIDS for the period 2000 – 2003.

The strategy derived from the analysis findings was accepted at the High Level Working Meeting (National Consensus Workshop) held in Moscow 20 April 2000. The leadership of the SPP partner regions and representatives of the concerned federal ministries took part in the meeting. Specific project ideas were introduced during the Meeting, and specific project proposals are currently under preparation in the SPP regions to ensure implementation of the approved strategy.

It is envisaged that both regions will participate in the projects from which all Russian regions are going to benefit.

Development of Social Indicators to Monitor the HIV Epidemic

Professionals of both regions (governmental and NGO sectors alike) involved in HIV-related activities will participate in the process of the development of social indicators, adjustment of measurement methods, building communication channels and trying out and preparing guidelines for establishing monitoring systems. The project comprises travel expenses, workshop costs, purchasing of related printed materials, and international consultancy.

Total amount requested for both regions: USD 75,000

Revision and Adjustment of Legislation

Professionals of both regions (governmental and NGO sectors alike) involved in HIV-related work will participate in activities aimed at the revision and adjustment, in the light of the unfolding HIV epidemic, of current Russian legislation. Special attention will be paid to legal provisions and practices in relation to illicit drug trafficking and prostitution. The participation will involve travel expenses, workshop / round table /advocacy meetings costs, purchasing of related printed materials, and an international consultancy.

Total amount requested for both regions: USD145,000

Emerging HIV-related Phenomena (HIV in the Penitentiary System, HIV in the Armed Forces, Mother-to-Child Transmission of HIV)

Professionals of both regions involved in the related areas will participate in activities aimed at analysis of the emerging phenomena, to develop common and specific strategies and recommendations on appropriate responses. The participation will involve travel expenses, workshop / round table /advocacy meetings costs, purchasing of related printed materials, preparation and distribution of the materials and an international consultancy.

Total amount requested for both regions: USD105,000

Grand total amount requested: USD 325,000

ST. PETERSBURG – RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Proposed Priority Activities and Expected Outputs 2000-2004

Monitoring of risk behaviour patterns

A coalition of governmental and non-governmental partners, including scientific (social sciences) institutes, plan to monitor risky behaviours of vulnerable populations. Monitoring will be carried out on a permanent basis, capitalizing on the experiences gained already by the AIDS Centre and the “Return” Fund, and comprise sociological studies of IDU and sexual behaviours of various social groups, like in-school and out-of-school youth, drug users, MSM, CSW, street children.

Total amount requested: USD 40,000 (for four years)

HIV prevention among IDUs

A coalition of partners, including NGOs “Return”, “AIDS, Sex and Health” and Medecins du Monde, plan to expand mobile and stationary units for needle exchange, counseling and condom distribution in order to increase coverage of services. For the mobile projects buses will be used, building on lessons learned from three pilot projects initiated in 1997 and 1998 with funding from OSI, Medecins du Monde and Sweden. Three new stationary projects will be situated within the city public health facilities. Additional services will include support to pregnant women who are injecting drug users. Sentinel surveillance efforts will be supported and enhanced.

Sub-total amount requested: USD 1,023,000 (for four years)

Outreach workers for the mobile and stationary projects will be trained, and a mobile team of trainers created to work for the prevention of overdoses and HIV transmission among IDUs.

Sub-total amount requested: USD 229,000 (for four years)

The Department of Penitentiaries and Justice plans to introduce HIV prevention programmes in the prison system. The project will include training of relevant staff, information campaigns, counseling and the provision of medical facilities and equipment.

Sub-total amount requested: USD 295,000 (for four years)

A three-month rehabilitation village for young drug users is planned by the Committee for Health, as well as establishment of a support programme for hospitalized drug users.

Sub-total amount requested: USD 237,000

Total amount requested: USD 1,784,000

HIV/STI Prevention Among CSW

Special efforts will be taken by the city governmental and NGO partners to provide information and protection means to the CSW, as well as to their clients.

Total amount requested: USD 120,000 (for four years)

Prevention Programmes for Young People

The Committee for Family, Childhood and Youth, Committee on Culture, Committee for Public Relations, Committee on Public Health, State Sanitary Supervision Service in cooperation with local and international NGO plan to carry out a broad multi-layered IEC campaign. The planned activities include:

- ✓ Production, duplication and distribution of video films and video jingles on HIV/STI prevention, sexual education, substance abuse prevention

Sub-total amount requested: USD 115,000 (for four years)

(USD 75,000 for production, and USD 40,000 for distribution and placement on TV channels for four years)

- ✓ Establishment of a cycle of TV programmes for youth on various aspects of HIV/AIDS, capitalizing on the experiences of the existing TV programmes, like “SOS” or “TV Security Service”, which touch the issues from time to time

Sub-total amount requested: USD 120,000 (for four years)

- ✓ Development and technical support to five HIV-related topical computer games for adolescents (two of those games have been developed already in the AIDS Centre)

Sub-total amount requested: USD 60,000 (for four years)

- ✓ Carrying out topical mass actions for youth (WAD, competitions in drawing, singing, social advertising, etc.)

Sub-total amount requested: USD 20,000 (for four years)

- ✓ Introduction of health education / life skills / sexual education
 - a) into the formal high, technical and higher school curricula – total 4 educational programmes
 - b) into the informal education curricula for the out-of-school youth

Sub-total amount requested: USD 104,000 (for four years)

- ✓ Development and implementation of IEC programmes for parents

Sub-total amount requested: USD 24,000 (for four years)

- ✓ Establishment of a youth club “Youth Against Drugs”, and training of youth leaders for implementation of peer education programmes

Sub-total amount requested: USD 105,000 (for four years)

- ✓ Establishment of 20 computerized training classes in the specialized youth medical and social centres

Sub-total amount requested: USD 160,000 (for four years)

- ✓ Development of a social advertising network embracing governmental and non-governmental organizations, which will produce and distribute badges, leaflets, bulletins, etc.

Sub-total amount requested: USD 200,000 (for four years)

- ✓ Establishment of and support to an information and analytical centre on HIV/STI, drug abuse

Sub-total amount requested: USD 20,000 (for four years)

- ✓ Establishment of an anonymous polyprofiled centre on adolescent (14 – 18 year – old) drug abuse prevention

Sub-total amount requested: USD 160,000

Total amount requested: USD 1,088,000 (for four years)

HIV/AIDS Awareness and Advocacy

Under the leadership of the City Government, a collaborative effort among organizations and departments, as well as NGO, is planned, namely a major awareness-raising campaign. Relevant materials – including leaflets, posters, video clips, and news articles – will be developed and disseminated by the various organizations, including mass media, youth groups, schools and the AIDS Centre.

Total amount requested: USD 164,000

Support for People with HIV

The Regional AIDS Centre plans to expand its support programmes for people living with HIV that include crisis counseling, the establishment of support groups and outreach activities through social workers. A programme to support the HIV positive IDU detected in the street programmes and keeping their anonymity will be established.

Total amount requested: USD 400,000

Grand total amount requested: USD 3,596,000 (for four years)

KALININGRAD REGION – RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Proposed Priority Activities and Expected Outputs 2000-2004

Prevention Programmes Among IDUs

Expanded harm reduction programmes are planned under the auspices of the Narcology Services in Kaliningrad Oblast. These include needle exchange, counseling, outreach activities and rehabilitation.

Total amount requested: USD 200,000

Prevention Programmes for Young People

A comprehensive health promotion programme is planned through collaboration between the local education departments, teacher's training college and department for youth. Plans call for peer education, life skills education as well as targeted training of teachers and relevant medical professionals. Specific HIV/AIDS and STI awareness programmes will be introduced in the school system.

Total amount requested: USD 160,000

STI Prevention for Commercial Sex Workers

Outreach services for commercial sex workers, including treatment, counseling, condom distribution and information, will be expanded in the Kaliningrad region. Special street clinics will be established.

Total amount requested: USD 80,000

Support for People with HIV

The Regional AIDS Centre plans to expand its support programmes for people living with HIV that include crisis counseling, the establishment of support groups and outreach activities through social workers.

Total amount requested: USD 80,000

HIV/AIDS Awareness and Advocacy

Under the leadership of the Regional AIDS Centre, a collaborative effort among city and oblast organizations and departments, plan a major awareness-raising campaign. Relevant materials – including leaflets, posters, video clips, and news articles – will be developed and disseminated by the various organizations, including mass media, youth groups, schools and the AIDS Centre.

Total amount requested: USD 60,000

Monitoring and Coordination Systems for HIV/AIDS

A major effort to improve existing monitoring and information systems will be undertaken by the Regional AIDS Centre in collaboration with other authorities. Specific emphasis will be placed on indicator development, data collection and capacity building. In addition, a coordination mechanism to increase efficiency among the multitude of partners is under discussion.

Total amount requested: USD 30,000

Estimating the Potential Consequences of the HIV/AIDS Epidemic

In partnership with the other SPP participating regions (Rostov and Volgograd), regional professionals will undertake an effort to estimate potential social and economic consequences of the HIV epidemic in Russia. Lessons learned in the Kaliningrad Region will provide a significant contribution to this joint exercise.

Total amount requested: USD 35,000

Grand total amount requested: USD 645,000